(b) if so, the steps taken/being taken to rescue and save Vikrant from such damage?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The attention of the Government was drawn to the deteriorating condition of INS Vikrant by the Naval authorities, who sought funds for carrying out repairs to Vikrant prior to the onset of the monsoons.

(b) the Government of India has sanctioned Rs. 5 crores for urgent reparis of Vikrant. The ship is scheduled for dry docking at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai, shortly.

Visit of Chinese AIR Force Delegation

304. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a fifty member Chinese air force delegation visited India's air defence installations in July this year;

(b) if so, the main purpose and objectives of the delegation's visit indicating the air defence stations and installations visited and inspected by them; and

(c) the agreements or MoUs signed with the delegation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The delegation consisted of officers of the Peoples Liberation Army Air Force Air Command College. As part of their curriculum, they visit a number of countries, India being one of them.They visited a radar unit, which is an air defence installation near Delhi. It was a visit and not an inspection.

(c) No agreements or MoUs were signed.

Fire accidents in ordnance depot

†305. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large quantity of explosives and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

ammunition stores in Garda ordnance Depot in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan has been destroyed due to devastating fire;

(b) if so, whether the cause of this fire could be found by Government;

(c) whether it is also a fact that this is the 16th fire accident in ordnance depcts during the last three years in the country and the third in Rajasthan during the last two years;

(d) if so, whether Government have considered seriously to check the continuously increasing fire accidents in ordnance depots; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (e) There is no Garda Ordnance Depot in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan. However, a fire incident took place in a formation mine dump located at Danwar which is 70 Kms.from Jaisalmer and is maintained by 30 Infantry Brigade under Southern Command. A Court of Inquiry to ascertain the cause of fire and extent of loss has been ordered by Headquarters Southern Command.

2. The following nine fire incidents have taken place in Ammunition/ Ordnance Depots during the last 3 years:-

Sl. No.	Name of Unit	Date of Incidence
1.	Ammunition Depot, Bharatpur	28th April, 2000
2.	Ammunition Depot, Dehu Road	3rd May, 2000
3.	Central Ordnance Depot, Kanpur	28th May, 2000
4.	2 Ammunition Sub Depot Mamoon (18 Field Ammunition Depot, Pathankot)	29th April, 2001
5.	2 Ammunition Sub Depot, Bridhwal (24 Field Ammunition Depot, Ganganagar)	24th May, 2001
6.	Ordnance Depot, Shakurbasti, New Delhi	3rd June, 2001
7.	Central Ordnance Depot, Jabalpur	6th August, 2001
8.	Ammunition Depot, Dappar	27th July, 2002
9.	19 field Ammunition Depot, Jodhpur	2nd August, 2002

3. In Rajasthan two fire incidents have occurred during the last two years in Ammunition Depots at 2 Ammunition Sub Depot Bridhwal (24 Field Ammunition Depot, Ganganagar) on 24.5.2001 and at 19 Field Ammunition Depot, Jodhpur on 2nd August, 2002.

4. All cases of fire incidents in Ordnance/Ammunition Depots have been investigated by courts of Inquiry. The following steps/remedial measures have been taken to ensure safety and security of Ammunition/ Ordnance Depots:-

(i) All depots have been directed to update safety and security instructions.

(ii) All depots have been inspected by a Board of Officers to check adequacy of safety and security arrangements.

(iii) Shortages in fire fighting equipment are being made up and defective equipment repaired.

(iv) Unserviceable ammunition is being disposed of on priority.

(v) Additional funds has been allotted for creation of more Explosive Store Houses for shifting ammunition presently stored on plinths under canvas.

Expansion of N.S.S. and N.C.C.

306. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose two-year compulsory military training to younger generation to inculcate patriotism among them;

(b) whether the National Service Scheme and the National Cadet Corps are also being expanded; and

(c) if so, the details of both the porposals?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No. Sir.

(b) and (c) There is no proposal at present for immediate expansion of National Service Schedule (N.S.S.). The sanctioned cadet strength of N.C.C. has, however, been increased from 12 lakh cadets to 12,76,560